

## Sacraments and the Church in the Scottish Evangelical Mind 1528-1555

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In the itinerary of his return to the country in 1555, John Knox opens with the account of a good, Protestant death. This was the passing of Elizabeth Adamson, who, confident of "the mercy of my God", sang Ps. 103 on her deathbed and refused Mass, informing the attending priests that it was an "idole" which had "nothing to do with the rycht institutioun of Jesus Christ". Immediately after mentioning her pious death, Knox tells of a dinner party with several men who were known at the time to harbour evangelical sentiments: John Willock, David Forrest, William Maitland of Lethington, Robert Lockhart of the Bar, and John Erskine of Dun. By contrast with the godly woman, some of these men were willing to argue "for the temperisar" in favour of attendance at Mass. Could it not be, they suggested, that this was a case similar to the Apostle Paul's attendance at the Temple in Jerusalem, where he "fanzeid him self to pay his vow with otheris" (a reference to Acts 21.23-26)? No, Knox responded, the apostle was fulfilling a divine commandment and was therefore not idolatrous; but perhaps even Paul was tempted to "purchase to him the favouris of the Jewes" by observing the "verray small pointes of the law", and perhaps this had not "proceaded frome the Holy Ghost". Indeed, Paul had run the risk of confirming "those obstinate Jewes in thare superstitioun by his exampill".<sup>1</sup>

By suggesting that the Apostle Paul had erred by participating in worship in the Temple, Knox shows the depth of his opposition to temporizing of any kind. And in their use of a biblical incident to justify their actions, his opponents showed a remarkable similarity to the

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<sup>1</sup> John Knox, *The Works of John Knox*, 6 vols, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh, 1846-64), i, 246-50.

French “Nicodemites” against whom John Calvin had argued. These had written to Calvin with the suggestion that they could attend Mass in the same way that Nicodemus had continued his membership in the Sanhedrin: believing evangelically while acting in accordance with the community in its ordinary ecclesiastical functions. Calvin’s response was unequivocal: those who believed evangelically but attended Mass were guilty of idolatry.<sup>2</sup> Like Calvin, Knox held that the fleeing of idolatry was a matter of great urgency, and this was a theme of his ministry as well as his writing. Thus when in his 1555-56 trip to Scotland Knox found that “diverse who had a zeall to godliness maik small scrupill to go to the Messe”, he had to act quickly and decisively, and he reports success after the dinner party; those present thereafter “refuissed all societie with idolatrie”.<sup>3</sup>

Knox’s juxtaposition of these incidents reveals more than his attitude to the Mass: it provides a prism for interpreting the activities of evangelicals in a time when they were highly secretive and therefore sparsely-documented. Not a great deal is known about Scottish evangelicals before the late 1550s, although it is clear that in various parts of the country there were societies of individuals committed to a solafideist position on salvation, the importance of Scripture-reading in the vernacular, and opposition to various church practices; so committed that they met together in conventicles in spite of official

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<sup>2</sup> Nicodemism has received considerable treatment; for the present purpose, I will use the broad approach of the Society’s president for 2005-06, which spans a spectrum “from the settled acquiescent conformism which has made a virtue out of pretence and mastered the skills of non-identification, to the restless agonizing of well-instructed consciences over insufferable tensions which can be resolved only by a choice between equally painful and costly challenges”: David F. Wright, “Why Was Calvin So Severe a Critic of Nicodemism?” in David F. Wright, Anthony N. S. Lane & Jon Balserak (eds.), *Calvinus Evangelii Propugnator. Calvin, Champion of the Gospel* (Grand Rapids, 2006), 68-92.

<sup>3</sup> Knox, *Works*, i, 250.

opposition and the occasional heresy proceeding.<sup>4</sup> Erskine's dinner-party guests, undoubtedly evangelical in these respects, reflect this general trend by their meeting together and other activities, yet they clearly did not regard themselves as the true church, nor did they eschew the sacraments of the official church. But Elizabeth Adamson showed the better way, and Knox made it his mission to convince evangelicals that the Mass was idolatrous and that their own groups might properly be considered the true church. The question that will provide the focus of this paper is how such a situation came to be: how, that is, the evangelicals of the preceding three decades had reached the point at which they felt it necessary to articulate a reason for their attendance at Mass. A broader context for this question is what implications for piety and practice were drawn from the central tenet of the evangelicals, justification by faith alone. The particular focus here will be on the devotional treatises produced by Scots evangelicals in the 1530s and 1540s, and the impact of George Wishart's preaching tours. It is not my contention that there was an absolutely uniform evangelical experience in Scotland prior to the 1550s, but that there is sufficient agreement on certain points in the surviving evidence to use "Scottish evangelical" in a guardedly broad sense.<sup>5</sup> My use of "Protestant" as distinct from "evangelical" in the Scottish context has primarily to do with ecclesiology and the sacraments, a distinction which will be borne out clearly in the following analysis.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Most of the evidence for such meetings is listed in James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform: Continuity and Change in the Reformation Kirk* (Edinburgh, 1989), 1-15.

<sup>5</sup> Regional variation has been the subject of many studies; some theological variance is also important, such as the inheritance of Lollardy, for which see Martin Dotterweich, "Murdoch Nisbet", in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> The *mot juste* for virtually any religious movement in the sixteenth century is increasingly elusive, and appellations need to be considered carefully. See, for example, the respectively centrifugal and centripetal approaches to *Protestant* and *evangelical* in Hans Hillerbrand (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1996); David Lotz, "Protestantism: An Overview" (3.351-57);

### **Justification by faith alone, the evangelical consensus**

Those with whom Knox dined were the “godly”; he also uses the term “professors” to describe those who had adopted Luther’s theology of salvation: that sinners are made righteous, or justified, completely apart from good works, by trusting or having faith in the righteousness of Christ on their behalf. By 1525, when the first evidence survives for Lutheran teaching in Scotland, his theology had caused an immense stir on the continent, and the many Scots scholars who travelled between their homeland and the continent must have been aware of this rapidly-expanding debate.

One such scholar, Patrick Hamilton, had studied at Paris and perhaps Louvain; in 1528 he was burned at the stake in St Andrews for spreading this teaching. His written disputation from Marburg, the so-called *Patrick’s Places*, was published posthumously for an English readership by John Frith first in 1531 and thereafter reprinted widely; it appears in various primers as well as Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (from the third edition) and Knox’s *History*.<sup>7</sup> However, Hamilton’s personal interactions were more immediately relevant for Scotland in the 1520s and 1530s. Both his sister and brother were charged with heresy soon after his death, as well as one Henry Forrest, who was accused of agreeing with Hamilton’s teaching. Hamilton spent his final month at St Andrews University, where he had in an earlier stay begun to adopt Lutheran ideas; during this last month he was engaged in academic disputation regarding the nature of faith and good works, and several of those at the university appear to have been impressed with his

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Siegfried Bräuer, “Protestantism: History of the Term” (3.357-59); Thomas Kaufman, “Evangelical Movements” (ii.81-82).

<sup>7</sup> The claim that this was “perhaps the most widely read of all early English Protestant writings save the Bible translations” (W.A. Clebsch, *England’s Earliest Protestants 1520-1535* (New Haven, 1964), 83) is an overstatement (Tyndale’s Romans Preface surely outstrips it), but the tract was widely published.



presentation.<sup>8</sup> John Gau, John Johnsonsone, and Alexander Allane (Alesius) all went into exile within a few years of Hamilton's death, and all refer fondly to him in the tracts they published for their homeland; indeed during his two periods in St Andrews Hamilton may have had contact with a great many individuals of later importance, including George Buchanan, John Douglas, Alexander Seton, John and Robert Wedderburn, John Winram, and Henry Balnaves.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the efficacy of his personal contacts, Hamilton demonstrates the powerful effect of a pious death; an observer famously commented that "the reik of Maister Patrik Hammyltoun hes infected as many as it blew upoun".<sup>10</sup> But as Wiedermann has shown, Hamilton's own conversion to the theology of justification by faith alone was probably effected by books during an earlier period at St Andrews. It was by reading Luther, probably with a view to refuting him, that Hamilton appears to have embraced a fairly developed notion of justification by faith alone. Hence he illustrates both of the basic means by which the doctrine of justification by faith was disseminated in Scotland, personal contact and printed books.

The doctrine itself was spelled out in "Patrick's Places", a short tract which began life as an academic dispute in Marburg but had a number of pithy flourishes which may have been later additions by the author, "calculated to evangelize".<sup>11</sup> In its few pages, *Patrick's Places*

<sup>8</sup> For the chronology of Hamilton's conversion, see Gotthelf Wiedermann, "Martin Luther versus John Fisher: Some Ideas Concerning the Debate on Lutheran Theology at St Andrews, 1525-30", *RSCHS*, xxii (1986), 13-34.

<sup>9</sup> See Annie I. Dunlop (ed.), *Acta Facultatis Artium Universitatis Sanctiandree*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1964), 2.299, 302, 316, 354, 357, 358, 361, 363, 365; James Maitland Anderson (ed.), *Early Records of the University of St Andrews: The Graduation Roll 1413-1579 and the Matriculation Roll 1473-1579* (Edinburgh, 1926), 98, 100, 106, 108, 110, 116, 118, 120-21, 123, 125, 204, 211-12, 218-19, 221-22, 225. Not all these identifications are certain, particularly not with as common a name as John Johnsonsone.

<sup>10</sup> Knox, *Works*, i.42.

<sup>11</sup> Gerhard Müller, "Protestant Theology in Scotland and Germany in the Early Days of the Reformation", *RSCHS*, xxii (1986), 103-17. Hugh Watt suggested that

offers a general digest of justification by faith alone. Hamilton begins by asserting that humans cannot obey God's law; that which is "impossible for vs" is commanded in order to drive sinners to "seke remedie at summe other".<sup>12</sup> This other is in fact Christ, whose righteousness is given to the sinner through faith, which is not merely intellectual assent but "surenesse".<sup>13</sup> Faith cannot therefore include confidence in one's own good works; to believe that works aid in salvation is in effect to say "J saue my selfe", even "J am christ".<sup>14</sup> Works not only do not make a person good; they do not make him evil either. Following Luther, Hamilton cites the analogy of a tree and its fruit: "Good frute maketh not the tre good / nor evell frute the evell tre / but a good tre beareth good frute & an evell tre evell frute".<sup>15</sup> Hamilton anticipates a charge of antinomianism in light of this doctrine, and replies like Luther that good works are a sign of faith whereas evil works cannot come from faith. The important distinction, for Luther as well as for Hamilton, is that works are the heartfelt response to faith, and not what effects salvation.<sup>16</sup>

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John Frith, who translated the text, had been responsible for many of the changes: Hugh Watt, "Hamilton's Interpretation of Luther, with Special Reference to 'Patrick's Places'", in Alexander Cameron (ed.), *Patrick Hamilton: First Scottish Martyr of the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1929), 28-36 (esp. 30-34). This has been challenged in Rainer Haas, "Franz Lambert und Patrick Hamilton in ihrer Bedeutung fur die Evangelische Bewegung auf den Britischen Inseln" (Inauguraldissertation, University of Marburg, 1973), 87-88; also, apparently, in Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, 82. Haas gives an almost complete publication history, apart from one edition; the correction may be found in N.T. Wright, *The Work of John Frith* (Appleford, 1978), 475 n.2.

<sup>12</sup> Haas, "Franz Lambert", 149. The critical edition, from which quotations are taken here, is appended to Haas's dissertation.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 152

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 160

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>16</sup> Foxe's reprinting of "Patrick's Places" expands the text in places, and Clebsch claims that Foxe thereby "drastically ... tempered the radical theology" of Hamilton by adding emphasis to the importance of the law and works: Clebsch, *England's*

Using the same contours and generally the same language, the Scots tracts of the 1530s all offer essentially the same message as “Patrick’s Places”. As on the continent, the doctrine was held by the Reformed as well, as may be seen from George Wishart a decade later. One minor deviation on justification itself comes from the translation into Scots of William Tyndale’s preface to the book of Romans, which was appended to the New Testament translation of Murdoch Nisbet, a notary public in Ayrshire. Tyndale followed Luther’s preface to Romans generally, but according to L. J. Trinterud and others, he softened Luther’s emphatic denial that works could fulfil the law, and placed more emphasis on the role of love enabling the justified to fulfill the law.<sup>17</sup> But this modification is slight in the text, and discerned only with a rather fine-tooth theological comb; moreover, this was not a printed text but a manuscript held by a conventicle in Ayrshire. This slim exception proves the rule: the Scots evangelicals were united on justification by faith alone. What this understanding of salvation implied for personal and ecclesiastical practice was a more complex matter.

### **Fruits of the good tree: implications of justification by faith, Patrick Hamilton**

Patrick Hamilton was accused by ecclesiastical authorities in Scotland of more than simply the teaching of justification by faith alone; he appears to have taught a wide range of the implications of this belief, which can be pieced together cautiously from varied sets of charges. The citation against him catalogues objectionable elements in his preaching: the laws, canons, ordinances and decrees of the fathers, being human constitutions, ought not be obeyed; the keys and censures

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*Earliest Protestants*, 84. However, Carl Trueman finds the changes “entirely consistent with ... Lutheranism”: Carl R. Trueman, *Luther’s Legacy: Salvation and the English Reformers, 1525-1566* (Oxford, 1994), 125 n.24.

<sup>17</sup> L.J. Trinterud, “A Reappraisal of William Tyndale’s Debt to Martin Luther”, *Church History*, xxxi (1962), 24-45. This is effectively the *tertius usus legis* in Reformed theology and Melancthon.

of the church should be disregarded, and the sacraments of the same not believed, the sanctuaries not frequented, nor images venerated, the souls of the dead not prayed for; nor tithes paid to God and the church; that there will be no profit for good works, nor punishment for evil deeds; our ancestors in God's church and those who believe in its sacraments to have died in an evil and wicked belief, and to have been buried in hell.<sup>18</sup> Not surprisingly, in a high-profile heresy case like this, detailed attention had been paid to the content of Hamilton's teaching, and the citation accuses him of developments which were common in Lutheran theology. Although some charges may have been overstated, a common enough phenomenon in such cases, they establish certainly that Hamilton had worked out some implications of justification by faith. Anything that had been considered meritorious should now be considered at best indifferent, if not shunned outright; hence images are not to be worshipped, tithes not paid, censures disregarded, canons ignored. To his hearers, Hamilton was suggesting a course of passive resistance which would be difficult to chart and dangerous to sail. For the most part, these are activities which would have been noticed, and Hamilton's call was not widely answered. But at least a few of those who heard him did end up drawing negative attention in the years following his death, and so presumably they had taken up this challenge in some way.

Three lists of formal charges against Hamilton were collected by John Foxe, and their main focus is theological.<sup>19</sup> The first set of charges, however, accuses Hamilton of some practical points as well:

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<sup>18</sup> Cited in Peter Lorimer, *Patrick Hamilton, the First Preacher and Martyr of the Scottish Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1857), 290 (translation mine). Knox's cursory summary in *Works*, i,16 is a rather general statement ("Pilgramage, Purgatorye, Prayer to Sanctes, and for the Dead, and such trifilles"), but reasonably in line with the content of the citation.

<sup>19</sup> Some discussion of Foxe's sources may be found in Thomas S. Freeman, "'The reik of Maister Patrik Hammyltoun': John Foxe, John Winram, and the Martyrs of the Scottish Reformation", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, xxvii (1996), 43-60.



denial of auricular confession, denial of the goodness of monastic vows, denial of Petrine succession and the power of the papal keys, the belief that the pope was antichrist, that all priests were equal to the pope, and that Hamilton himself was a bishop.<sup>20</sup> Confession and monastic vows, seen as meritorious, were natural enemies of justification by faith alone; the harsher position on the papacy is of course also consistent with Luther. If the papacy claims to forgive sins, it denies the work of Christ, and hence is antichrist. But the final charges here are curious. The equality of all priests with the pope, and Hamilton's claim to be a bishop, may be significant distortions of Hamilton's own positions, or even fabrications, but if genuine, they would suggest some contact with a very different tradition regarding the outworkings of justification by faith.

On the whole, however, these developments are entirely consistent with the basic steps taken by Luther. Justification by faith alone had led him from 1515-20 to deny that any human work could fulfil the law or give a sinner credit before God, which meant that any practice that claimed merit was to be eschewed; to deny the authority of the pope to forgive sins, and as a result to deny that anything done on behalf of the dead in Purgatory did them any good; it led him to affirm that popes and councils could make mistakes; it led him to suggest that ordinary people needed to understand the Word of promise, which meant that services and songs should be in the vernacular; it led him to deny the intermediary role of the priest and the holiness of monastic vows, and to affirm the godliness of all vocations, including marriage.

Hamilton appears to have followed many of these leads, though there is no mention in the charges against him of innovations in worship.<sup>21</sup> To follow Hamilton's lead, then, was to champion

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<sup>20</sup> John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 4th edn. (London, 1584), 974. Alesius recalled two points, the denial of free will and the denial of merit for good works, but did not include any practical implications: cited in Lorimer, *Patrick Hamilton*, 236.

<sup>21</sup> Hamilton did have a daughter who is mentioned in Treasurer's Accounts, viii, 174-75, 183, 187-88. Alesius claimed that he had married shortly before his death

solafideism and criticize those practices that appeared to contradict this doctrine, but not to establish anything claiming status as the true church; this appears, in any case, to have been the course taken by his brother and sister.<sup>22</sup> Rather more curious is Henry Forrest, who was accused of believing Hamilton's teaching to be true; as he was being defrocked, Foxe reports that he cried out, "Take from me not onely your owne orders, but also youre owne baptisme". Foxe took this to mean "whatsoever is besides that which Christ himselfe instituted", but this tantalizingly vague statement may show a rather more strident inheritance from Hamilton.<sup>23</sup>

### Hamilton's circle: John Gau

In the handful of tracts written by Hamilton's protégés from St Andrews the doctrine of justification finds further practical development. Alexander Alesius (Allane) drew an indirect implication in two short tracts addressed to James V on the translation of the Bible into the vernacular.<sup>24</sup> When Alesius had fled from Scotland he began a distinguished career in England and Leipzig, but remained attentive to his homeland. An episcopal decree around 1532 forbade Bible-reading in the vernacular, and Alesius wrote two tracts against this addressed to James V. Alesius did not base his case on justification by faith, sensibly

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"quia hypocrisin odivit, noluit inducere cucullum": cited in Lorimer, *Patrick Hamilton*, 238. However, Durkan rightly wonders who would have performed such a ceremony in Kincavil at this time: John Durkan, "Scottish Reformers: The Less Than Golden Legend", *Innes Review*, xlv (1994), 16. Whether he followed Luther's lead by marrying is thus uncertain.

<sup>22</sup> His brother James recanted more than once: see Denys Hay (ed.), *The Letters of James V* (Edinburgh, 1954), 274-75, 330; his sister Katherine defended justification by faith alone: Foxe, *Actes* (4th edn), 982.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Alexandro Alesii Epistola contra decretum quoddam Episcoporu[m] in Scotia* (n.p., 1533?); and *Alexandro Alesii Scotti Responsio ad Cochlei Calumnias* ([Leipzig], 1554) (the latter is the second edition).

enough, but his advocacy of the vernacular Bible clearly followed from that teaching.

Some implications of justification were spelled out in the work of another Scots exile, John Gau, who would serve as a minister in the Danish Lutheran church. In Malmö or Copenhagen, Gau produced in 1533 a translation into Scots of a Danish catechetical text by Christiern Petersen for his homeland (itself a translation from Urbanus Rhegius). This text, the *Richt Vay to the Kingdom of Heuine*, differs entirely in its reception from "Patrick's Places"; only one copy survives, and no direct reference to the work has survived elsewhere. Like *Patrick's Places*, it was illegal in Scotland under the terms of the parliamentary statute of 1525 forbidding books by Luther or his followers.<sup>25</sup>

As a catechetical text, the *Richt Vay* is a work of instruction rather than persuasion; it offered explanations of the ten commandments, the twelve articles of belief, the Paternoster, and the Magnificat. In the sections of the introduction and conclusion which are original to Gau, Hamilton's influence is tangible, seen both in a description of his death and a near-quotation from "Patrick's Places".<sup>26</sup> Certainly in line with Hamilton's teaching is the content of the *Richt Vay* on justification, though here the themes are developed more fully. For example, the ten commandments are explicated positively rather than negatively, as in Luther's short catechism.

The criticism of those who rely on their works for salvation here attains a more sharply anticlerical tone. Clergy who oppose the use of the vernacular Bible, for example, are "blynd giders a[n]d pastors" who are guilty of "ignorance", "voluptuousz a[n]d flesclie liff (quhilk thay haiff of the sweit and blwid of the pur)"; their lack of preaching is

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<sup>25</sup> John Gau, *The Richt Vay to the Kingdom of Heuine*, trans. and ed. A. F. Mitchell (Edinburgh, 1888).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 105, to the oppositional series in "Patrick's Places". A critical edition has not appeared to sort out specific sections which belong to Gau, though there are clearly parts of the text that may be attributed to him. Much of the introduction is very close to the Marshall primer of 1534 and Luther's *Betbüchlein* of 1522 (Weimar edition 10(2):375ff.).

responsible for the rise of sects which “preachis dremis and fablis”.<sup>27</sup> The papacy, for example, is accused of “manifest leinge and haldis ye pepil in errour” for promoting the sale of indulgences.<sup>28</sup> This is based on the distinction of true and false churches, which is presented in purely Augustinian terms but developed along Lutheran lines. Since the true church is “al chrissine men and [the] congregacione of sanctis quhilk ar apone the zeird”, it is the congregation that holds the power of the keys and which should elect ministers.<sup>29</sup> The keys which belong to the pope and the bishops are in fact the keys “to prech godis word the law and the wangel”, and the Petrine succession of the papacy is denied.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, the “fals kirk”, although it claims to be “ane chrissine kirk” is heretical and will be condemned.<sup>31</sup> However, firmly this position is articulated, the *Richt Vay* suggests no positive action regarding it, and readers are enjoined to pray for those in ecclesiastical authority to understand Scripture, and to obey rulers even when they are “ewil or guid”.<sup>32</sup> In fact Christians should expect trials: “we man cum to the heuine throw suffering and be na oder vay onder ye heuine”.<sup>33</sup>

The *Richt Vay* states that “the bodi and blwid of our lord Iesus christ is contenit veralie in the sacrament of the alter onder the forme of breid and vine”, echoing Luther’s eucharistic language (*realiter* and *sub specie*).<sup>34</sup> One further eucharistic reference is a quotation from I Cor. 10.17, “we quhilk eitis of ane breid”, which the *Richt Vay* embellishes with “and drinkkis of ane cowp”, surely a reference to the utraquism of the Lutheran territories where this document emerged, but with no

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 58. The true church can be seen in its marks, being “fed with our lord Iesus Christis word and his halie sacrament”: *ibid.*, 80.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.



particular sense that this was a practical instruction to the reader.<sup>35</sup> In addition to referring to appropriate activity, the work discourages traditional religious practices, both those associated with the church and those of a more popular nature, such as “thay that wsis corsis / chrystal / murrur / bukis / vordis and special naymis and reding and coniuracione to find hwid hurdis in the zeird”, those who attend astrological signs, or those who “chermis thair self or thair hws of thair bairnis or seruandis or beistis / or bindis herbis or writings or ony oder thing apone thayme to saif thayme from wolff or ony oder parel”.<sup>36</sup> Here was practical advice based on justification by faith alone: avoid practices which contradict the doctrine. However, this advice does not suggest that alternative practice of the sacraments should follow from its distinction between the true and false churches.

John Gau did not in fact compose more than a few pages of the *Richt Vay*, but the fact that he selected it is nevertheless instructive. He must have expected a utility for this text in particular over the many others to which he must have had access in Denmark, and must have been able to raise funds for its publication abroad. What may particularly have commended this text to Gau is its usefulness as a manual of household devotion; its purpose was surely, as Professor Cameron claimed, “to engender an atmosphere of personal evangelical piety”.<sup>37</sup> Like any catechism, the organization was clear, and the material could be adapted to different individuals; the text itself encouraged householders to teach their “bairnis in the chrissine faith”.<sup>38</sup> As an implication of justification by faith, such home devotion was necessary to help individuals grasp the concept of salvation; the *Richt Vay* claimed that its explication of the Apostles’ Creed contained “al thing yat is needful and requirit to onderstand to the saluation of the

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> James K. Cameron, “Aspects of the Lutheran Contribution to the Scottish Reformation 1528-1552”, *RSCHS* xxii (1986), 1-12.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

saul”.<sup>39</sup> However, the Bible should also be read; those who are “lerit and cane reid and onderstand suld se and reid in the bibil quhilk is the grund and vol of al godlie doctrine and hewinlie visdom neidful to knaw”.<sup>40</sup> Such home devotion was by definition illegal in Scotland, for it enjoined the use and discussion of illegal theological books and the Bible. Gau believed that his audience in Scotland would defy these regulations in private, which is the most significant outworking of solafideism he foresaw for his homeland. Gau’s selection of this text indicates that Scottish evangelicals in the early 1530s were willing to defy ecclesiastical and civil strictures at some risk, primarily by reading prohibited materials; however, their anticlericalism did not suggest that they should separate themselves from the institutional church.

### John Johnsone

Of another exile associated with Patrick Hamilton, John Johnsone, nothing is known beyond his 1536 tract *Ane comfortable exhortation: of oure mooste holy Christen faith / and her frutes*. Like the *Richt Vay*, this was printed by Johannes Hoochstraten, probably in Antwerp. This work was anglicized by the printer, though several Scots spellings remain, demonstrating the author’s nationality.<sup>41</sup> Johnsone made it clear that he was out of the country but intended to return to Scotland: “i wil exhort you by worde (yee by the worde of God) as my deare bretherne in the lorde ...vnto a prosperous iorney (by the will of God) fortune me to come vnto you”.<sup>42</sup> That in saying this Johnsone was quoting Rom. 1.10 is indicative of the text as a whole, which consists mostly of quotation from the 1526 Tyndale New Testament, the 1531 Joye Isaiah, and some form of the 1535 Coverdale Psalms<sup>43</sup>. In form this is a commonplace

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 27

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 142; Haas also speculates on this: Haas, *Franz Lambert*, 131.

<sup>42</sup> Johnsone, *Comfortable*, [A3r].

<sup>43</sup> The colophon states that the work was printed on 20 Jan. 1535/6, but its New Testament quotations all came from the 1526 Tyndale edition, not any of the plentiful editions of 1534-35; this led Cameron to question the date: James K.

book, and it develops Lutheran themes with numerous quotations, which are usually presented in the order in which they appear in the Bible.

Johnsone's primary focus is justification by faith alone, and like Hamilton and Gau, he presented the progression of the soul from the faith that justifies to the love of God that winsomely compels good works: "nether is [God's] lawe heuy to soche a man" but is "an easy yoke / and an light burdyng thorowe lowe".<sup>44</sup> But Johnsone's particular emphasis is the fact that faith will bring trials, especially in "theyr euyl and peralouse dayes" of "persecutio[n] and trouble", and this forms a major theme in the text.<sup>45</sup> Johnsone inserted a quotation from Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* to explain why such trials come: "when [God] byldeth / he casteth all downe first. He is no yatcher / he can not bylde on a nother mans foundacion".<sup>46</sup> Patrick Hamilton is held up as an example of one who suffered for his faith, but his persecutors' "hongre is not slokned / but they abyde for theyr praye watchynge as raweninge wolues / yf they mo se any of Christes poore

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Cameron, "John Johnsone's An Comfortable Exhortation of Our Mooste Holy Christen Faith and Her Frutes: An Early Example of Scots Lutheran Piety", in Derek Baker (ed.), *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c. 1500-1750*, Studies in Church History, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1979), 137. However, the work does quote from the Coverdale Psalms of 1535 (unidentified edition), thus the date of publication from the colophon is correct. To demonstrate the use of Tyndale 1526 as opposed to 1534, cf. the quotation from Gal. 5.20 in *Comfortable*, B1v. The Isaiah quotations are from George Joye (trans.), *The Prophete Isaye / translated into Englysshe* (Antwerp, 1531). The leading candidates for quotations from the Psalms are *A Paraphrasis vpon al the Psalmes of Dauid, made by Johannes Ca[m]pensis* (Antwerp, 1535) or the 1535 Coverdale Bible, *BIBLIA The Bible / that is, the holy Scripture* (Cologne?, 1535).

<sup>44</sup> Johnsone, *Comfortable*, [D2v].

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, [D2v-D3r].

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, [D5r]; cf. William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, ed. David Daniell (London, 2000), 6. The quoted section is lengthier than the selection above.

shepe to deuoure".<sup>47</sup> Johnsonsone encourages his readers that those who have the Holy Spirit will have the "power ... to suffre for Gods worde", but even if one "clene agenst his herte ... have denied as did Peter / or haue delyuered his boke to the tyrauntes or put it away secretlye", this should not bring despair, for sometimes God takes away their strength to make them rely upon his strength.<sup>48</sup>

Johnsone thus assumes that his evangelical readers have a developed sense of identity as a persecuted group. His practical advice is to persevere, as the "power ... to suffre for Gods worde" distinguishes them from the children of the devil and will lead them to everlasting life; by contrast, their persecutors will be put "out of the way accordynge vnto the confortable ensamples of the holy scripture".<sup>49</sup> The persecuting "worldly bisshoppes and theyr disciples" are not only guilty of "worldly preachynge", but they "murthre a[n]d burne youre men childerne which manfully co[n]fesse that Jesus is the lorde".<sup>50</sup> Johnsonsone further criticizes clerical celibacy and abstinence from meat during fasts as "errore / and deulyshe doctrine"; while fasting could still be useful, it should no longer be compelled.<sup>51</sup> Here were brief instructions which might in fact guide the persecuted flock to some practical activity in spite of the danger; indeed some of the five martyrs of Perth in 1544 were accused of eating a goose "on Alhalow euen".<sup>52</sup>

Johnsone also stressed, as an implication of justification by faith alone, the central importance of reading the Bible. The form of the work itself, a collection of scriptural passages thematically arranged, underscores this point, but it is also articulated by Johnsonsone himself: "of ... consolation are the psalms full / the lorde open youre hertes / to

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<sup>47</sup> Johnsonsone, *Comfortable*, [E2v].

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, [E8r].

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, [E4r, E5v-E6r].

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, E1v-[E2r].

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, [F5v-F6v] (quotation [F6v]).

<sup>52</sup> Foxe, *Actes* (4th edn), 1266-67.



reade them and vnderstonde them perfectly in the sprite".<sup>53</sup> Those who "despice Gods worde: countinge it as a phantasy or a dreame" are persecutors who will be punished.<sup>54</sup>

Like Gau's *Richt Vay*, Johnsons's *Comfortable exhortation* is only known because it survives. No other contemporary references to the volume, two copies of which survive, can be found. But that Johnsons wanted to publish what appears to have been his own commonplace book is again instructive. Like Gau's work, this is meant to be practical and accessible to a readership which embraces justification by faith alone and feels persecuted because of this. Johnsons assumes that his readers will have a tense relationship with church authorities, but his instruction is simply to persevere and study the Bible, while disavowing practices that appeared to earn salvation, such as clerical celibacy or enforced fasting.<sup>55</sup> Johnsons's tract underscores the sense of identity that Scottish evangelicals were developing, though without any suggestion of their being the true church or their need to separate themselves from the Mass.

### Henry Balnaves

Twenty years after Hamilton's death, another of his possible associates from St Andrews, Henry Balnaves, composed "The confession of Faith, conteining how the troubled man should seeke refuge at his God".<sup>56</sup> Balnaves's colourful career is well known: after his time at St Andrews,

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<sup>53</sup> Johnsons, *Comfortable*, [E6v].

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, [E7r].

<sup>55</sup> Cameron described the tract as "strikingly moderate and devoid of polemical bitterness", and hence suggested that in it was "nothing of the political and doctrinal struggles that had begun to embitter religious life on the continent, nothing of the theological debates and differences that had begun to divide catholic and protestant, Lutheran and reformed": Cameron, "John Johnsons's", 147. The point is well-taken in comparison to many continental works of the mid-1530s, but overstated for Scotland. Johnsons is deeply critical of ecclesiastical authority, and is well-aware of basic theological distinctions.

<sup>56</sup> Reprinted in Knox, *Works*, iii, 405-543.

he acted in a variety of legal capacities, eventually sitting on the Court of Session. He began to work as a diplomat, and in this capacity he began to tip his hand as an evangelical who favoured English-style reforms. In late 1546, some months after the murder of Cardinal Beaton, Balnaves joined those taking refuge in St Andrews Castle, though he left on at least two occasions under heavy French fire to negotiate English support. When the castle fell, Balnaves was taken prisoner in Rouen, and while there, according to Knox, he composed in 1548 "The confession of faith". This manuscript found its way to Knox on the galleys, where he added notes and a précis, and eventually back to Scotland, where it was lost until 1584, rediscovered, and published by Thomas Vautrollier.<sup>57</sup> This strange publication history presents difficulties for assessment, and while Balnaves's authorship may be questioned, there is no compelling reason to doubt it, even though the published version was in English rather than Scots.<sup>58</sup> Nor does it appear that Knox altered the basic manuscript he had been sent onboard his galley. For example, in the body of the text, Balnaves refers to "wicked and ungodly pastors", but the marginal note adds Knoxian flair with "pestilent Papisticall preists".<sup>59</sup> No direct source of textual dependence has been established, though it is certain that Balnaves was highly familiar with Luther's commentaries on Genesis and Galatians, and perhaps Tyndale's *Obedience* and *Parable of the Wicked Mammon*.<sup>60</sup>

Balnaves began his treatise with persecution, which in prison he must have felt rather intensely, and he assumes that his evangelical

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<sup>57</sup> Martin Dotterweich, "Henry Balnaves", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>58</sup> On the sending of documents in and out of prisons, see Thomas S. Freeman, "'Great searching out of bookes and autors': John Foxe as an Ecclesiastical Historian" (Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1975), 367-75.

<sup>59</sup> Knox, *Works*, iii, 516, 518.

<sup>60</sup> For the connection to Luther, see Hugh Watt, "Henry Balnaves and the Scottish Reformation", *RSCHS*, v (1935), 23-39. For a fuller discussion of authorship issues, see Martin Dotterweich, "The emergence of evangelical theology in Scotland to 1550" (Ph.D. dissertation, Edinburgh University, 2002), 238-43.

readers in Scotland face the same. Balnaves begins his work by explaining that the godly have always suffered for believing in justification by faith alone, and offers a history of this persecution beginning with Cain and Abel. Frequently, Balnaves uses as a refrain a quotation from Luther's Galatians commentary: "Let Abell dye and Cain live; that is our law, sayeth the ungodly".<sup>61</sup> Because the persecutors of the "article of justification" are often found in the church, Balnaves introduces an Augustinian distinction between the visible and invisible churches, and though he does not refer to the *locus classicus*, the parable of the wheat and the tares in Mt. 13.24-30, 36-43, he makes it clear that the visible church "consistes in the godly and ungodly".<sup>62</sup> Christ's "faithfull litle flocke" would always be "pursued with the wicked, and never pursueth, by which the Disciples and servauntes of Christ are knowen", a position which by 1548 had become problematic elsewhere.<sup>63</sup>

By the time Balnaves wrote his treatise, a number of events had changed the religious situation, notably the legalisation of Bible-reading by Parliament in 1543. This Act did not, however, ease the situation for evangelicals, since its second clause offered the clarification, "Prouidi[n]g alwayis yat na ma[n] despute or hald oppunzeonis vnd[ir] ye panis [con]tenit In ye act[is] of p[ar]liame[n]t", reinforcing an Act of 1541 which stipulated "That na p[ri]vate co[n]uention[n]is be maid to desput on[n] ye scripto[u]r".<sup>64</sup> But Balnaves shared the emphasis on Bible-reading that had characterised the evangelicals of the 1530s. The final locus for all authority is Scripture, and thus Bible-reading was done under the highest authority; those who forbade it were "not ministers of the Word of God, or true successors of the Apostles; but

<sup>61</sup> For example, Knox, *Works*, iii, 57.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 459. Knox's marginal note makes the connection to the parable clear. Cf. Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London, 1986), 606-07, 626.

<sup>63</sup> Knox, *Works*, iii, 459.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas Thomson and C. Innes (eds.), *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland 1124-1707*, 12 vols. (Edinburgh, 1844-75) ii, 370 (1541), 415 (1543).

false teachers, subverters of the word, and very antichrists".<sup>65</sup> Therefore he tells his readers to continue to read the Bible, heeding their "owne conscience and the Scriptures of God", submitting themselves "to the Scriptures of God, and auctoritie of the faithful church of Christ".<sup>66</sup> Here again Balnaves appears to be drawing on the distinction between the visible and invisible churches.

Balnaves contrasts Bible-reading as an exercise for the godly with practices which run counter to solafideist theology. Hence householders are charged to foster Bible-reading and catechetical activity in their homes, as opposed to "babling upon a paire of beades, speaking to stocks or stones".<sup>67</sup> Balnaves lists further acts that do not proceed from faith, including

... the superstitious worshipping of Saintes; going in pilgrimage; purgeing in purgatorie; hallowing of water, or other elements; foundation of masses to publike or private idolatrie; offering or sacrifices making, not commanded in the Word of God; choice of meats; forbidding of marriage in the church of God; and abominable abuses of the whole Christian religion, by the shaven, oincted, or smeared priests, bishops, monkes, and freirs....<sup>68</sup>

Justification by faith alone, by prohibiting such works, would allow all estates to fulfill their vocations appropriately, with a resulting improvement to the entire society, with "no contempt nor trouble in the Common weale".<sup>69</sup> Balnaves lists duties for each estate, which show that obedience to the gospel and obedience to the civil order were by no means mutually exclusive.

This development of justification by faith shows a definite shift from the earlier writings in charging evangelicals to be good citizens,

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<sup>65</sup> Knox, *Works*, iii, 539.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 448-49.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 537.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 519.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 525-26.



and to give no cause for charges of sedition; having been highly involved in the short-lived Henrician policy of 1543 under the regency of the 4th Earl of Arran, Balnaves was sensitive to the attitude of civil authority to unrest, and wanted his evangelical audience to be well-positioned in the event that the government would change its religious stance. (In the later 1550s, Balnaves would play a significant role in seeing these opportunities gained.) On the other hand, Balnaves defied ecclesiastical authority: one could be a good citizen, then, while eschewing a number of church teachings and practices on solafideist grounds.

In developing the implications of justification by faith alone, Balnaves only mentions the Mass in the briefest terms, but his comments are revealing. Criticizing endowed Masses, Balnaves notes that they are founded “to publike or private idolatrie”, though this does not necessarily suggest that the Mass *per se* is idolatrous. Elsewhere, Balnaves mentions “the blessed Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, after their maner, offered daily”; surely this qualification is meant to denigrate the practice.<sup>70</sup> However, as with the tracts of the 1530s, there is no suggestion of anything resembling alternative practice of the sacraments in “The confession of faith”.

In sum, the practical implications of justification were spelled out in various ways by Patrick Hamilton and his successors. Agreed on justification by faith alone, they suggested a variety of ways in which it should affect behaviour, from the public course of passive resistance to church regulations to the secretive reading of the Bible in the home. In Gau, Johnstone, and Balnaves, it is assumed that readers of these books will be undergoing persecution for their belief in justification by faith alone; Balnaves stresses that they nevertheless had to be good citizens. A great deal of activity in Scotland mirrors the emphasis of these documents, most notably in the practice of Bible reading, which is not only remembered in histories, but was a focus of some heresy trials. Similar criticisms of church leaders emerged publicly as well, but as in

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 518-19.

these devotional and theological tracts, no alternative ecclesiastical identity was forthcoming, nor does alternative sacramental practice appear in other records.<sup>71</sup>

### **The lack of sacramental practice before the mid-1550s**

In Knox's narrative of the events of his Scottish sojourn in 1555-56 after the dinner-party, he reports administration of "the Lordis Table" for Erskine of Dun, for others in the west, and in finally in East Lothian, and in general he implies that this had not happened previously. At Calder, for example, many evangelicals "convened, asweall for the doctrin, as for the rycht use of the Lordis Table, *which befor thei had never practised*".<sup>72</sup> In fact, Knox only mentions one previous instance of a reformed communion in the country, his own administration of the sacrament "in the same puritie that now it is ministrat in the churches of Scotland" in the castle of St Andrews during its occupation in 1547 following the murder of Cardinal David Beaton.<sup>73</sup> Significantly, in disputations with John Annand and John Winram during this his time in St Andrews Castle, Knox made clear distinctions between the true and false churches, distinguishing himself from the "synagog of Sathan".<sup>74</sup> Those who participated in this communion "openlie professed" their position, but there is no indication that this practice continued in Fife afterwards.

Other evidence for Protestant sacramental practice in Scotland in the early decades of the sixteenth century is scarce indeed. Records of heresy trials survive only in second-hand form, but those recorded by Knox or John Foxe include no reference to any alternative practice of the sacraments before 1550. Parliament had passed an Act in 1541 "To

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<sup>71</sup> A comprehensive assessment of such activity may be found in James Kirk, "The Religion of Early Scottish Protestants", in James Kirk (ed.), *Humanism and Reform: The Church in Europe, England, and Scotland, 1400-1643*, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 8 (Oxford, 1991), 361-411.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 249-50. Emphasis mine.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 202

<sup>74</sup> Knox, *Works*, i, 188-89; cf. 193-94, 200.

ye Confusion[e] of all heresy yat all ye sacrame[n]tis be haldin and honourit as yai haue bene In all tymes bygane w[i]t[h]in yis realme", but this legislates against failure to honour official sacraments rather than actual alternative practice, and evangelical disdain for auricular confession is very possibly behind this.<sup>75</sup> In 1543, following a short-lived Henrician policy on the part of the regent James Hamilton, earl of Arran, the privy council reasserted its religious orthodoxy by expressing its concern regarding "sclanderous billis, writtingis, ballatis and bukis", as well as "sacramentaris". The term *sacramentarian* was most frequently used to refer to those who held a memorialist position on the sacraments; here the council forbade anyone to "disput or hald openionis of the sacramentis nor of the affect or assence thair of utherwayis nor is ellis ressavit be the haly kirk".<sup>76</sup> What precisely these opinions were is not spelled out, but the prohibition concerns opinion and does not suggest a problem with alternative sacramental practice. A final suggestion of alternative sacramental practice before 1550 comes from the rather late account of George Wishart in Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, in which Wishart, at breakfast on the morning of his execution by burning in 1546, offered an extemporaneous sermon on the sufferings of Christ, broke bread and gave communion in both kinds to those in attendance.<sup>77</sup> Again, if this account is genuine, there is nothing to suggest that this event set any kind of precedent.

What this odd collection of references suggests is that on the one hand, criticism of the sacraments, and disrespect for some sacramental practices, concerned ecclesiastical and civil authorities before 1550. But these authorities did not mention the prospect of alternative sacramental practice, of which there is virtually no evidence during this time. The reason for this is twofold: a lack of leadership and the lack of an alternative ecclesiology. That the true and false church distinction had

<sup>75</sup> *APS*, ii, 370.

<sup>76</sup> Robert Kerr Hannay (ed.), *Acts of the Lords of Council in Public Affairs 1501-1554* (Edinburgh, 1932), 527-28.

<sup>77</sup> George Buchanan, *The History of Scotland*, 6 vols, trans. James Aikman, rev. edn. (Glasgow, 1827-32): ii, 356.

not been worked out fully may be seen in the tracts of the 1530s and 1540s; it was one thing to consider elements of the institutional church to be the false church, but quite another to suggest that a group of individuals were themselves the true church. In fact, with Balnaves's distinction between the visible and invisible churches, the ecclesiological distinction was made even more complex. Comparatively few of the Scottish evangelicals were public figures, and of these many went into exile; in any case they do not appear to have been calling for the dramatic steps which Knox would eventually espouse.<sup>78</sup>

### **The importance of George Wishart**

When the sacraments may have been addressed more fully was in the preaching of George Wishart. At the end of a tumultuous career, Wishart returned to Scotland in 1543 and would embark on a two-and-a-half-year preaching tour before his execution by burning in 1546.<sup>79</sup> Wishart brought Reformed Protestantism to Scotland, and his teaching surely reflected the theology of the First Swiss Confession of Faith of 1536, which he translated and which was published posthumously in English in 1548.<sup>80</sup> Like other Reformed theological statements, this too

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<sup>78</sup> There is one possible exception both in terms of leadership and ecclesiology, namely Sir John Borthwick, who was forced to flee in 1540. At some point, Borthwick produced written responses to the charges leveled against him, which Foxe published in the *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum* (Basel, 1559), and later in the first and fourth English editions of the *Actes*. These feisty responses not only display a mordant anticlericalism, but also clearly Reformed theology, including the notion that the Mass is idolatrous: see John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 1st edn. (London, 1563), 575-85. However, these responses were not produced until after Borthwick was living in England, perhaps for some years, and he may have refined his positions there, hence he is not included in this survey.

<sup>79</sup> For Wishart's career, see Martin Dotterweich, "George Wishart", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>80</sup> George Wishart (trans.), *The confescion of the fayth of the Sweserla[n]des* (London, 1548); reprinted in David Laing (ed.), *The Miscellany of the Wodrow*



embraces justification by faith alone entirely, though some of its implications were differently construed. The Confession distinguishes visible and invisible churches, and notes that the latter may be discerned by "certayne externall rytes" and "lawful teachynge".<sup>81</sup> "Romenishe heedes" are not to be recognised, and "vescels, garments, waxe, lyghtes, alters, golde, sylver ... and chefely Idols and Images" should be "put away".<sup>82</sup> Here was a clearly Reformed development of justification, suggesting iconoclastic practice. The Confession uses memorialist language for the sacraments of baptism and eucharist, which are "badges and tokens of Christian societie", not "naked sygnes, but ... sygnes and verities together", qualifying the Reformed position in a time when concord with Luther was still being sought.<sup>83</sup> As a confession of faith, this document shows some basic outlines of Wishart's theology; more can be determined from other sources.

One of his former students at Cambridge, Emery Tylney, later reported to Foxe that Wishart had held that the "ministry of the Mass is the mystery of iniquity", which suggests the notion (around 1542) that the Mass was idolatrous. Tylney was also struck by Wishart's generosity with clothing and bedsheets to the poor, and his propensity to fasting.<sup>84</sup> The only other source for Wishart's mature theology is the record of his trial (first printed 1548), though he was not allowed to answer all the charges against him. With regard to the eucharistic charges, Wishart stated that without the "inward moving of the harte", the sacrament was ineffective, shifting the emphasis from the elements to the recipients. He presented the case made by a Jew he had met on the Rhine that the host "was but a pece of bread, backin upon the asches, and no other thing elles". Moreover, he suggested that parents

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*Society*, vol. i (Edinburgh, 1844), 11-23. Wishart's was the *editio princeps* of the First Helvetic Confession, which was not published in Latin until 1581.

<sup>81</sup> Laing, *Miscellany*, 16.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 19-20.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. The Confession appeared in the same year (1536) as the Wittenberg Concord.

<sup>84</sup> Foxe, *Actes* (4th edn), 1268.

needed to understand what was being promised for their children in baptism.<sup>85</sup> Wishart's adherence to Reformed theology also appears in his application of the Scripture principle to other questions at his trial. Without biblical warrant, he rejects auricular confession and questions the use of holy water and curses.<sup>86</sup> Regarding criticism of expensive churches, Wishart claimed, "I said never that churches should be destroyed", perhaps an evasive answer regarding iconoclasm. Churches were to be recognized by the marks of word and sacrament.<sup>87</sup>

Wishart's theology thus differs from that of his evangelical predecessors regarding the true and false churches as well as the Mass.<sup>88</sup> He had a sharper conception of the purified church, which led him to suggest the abandonment of a number of church practices as well as images. His sacramental memorialism, coupled with belief that the Mass was idolatrous, may have suggested to his hearers the possibility of alternative administration of the eucharist. During more than two years of itinerant preaching in different parts of the country, Wishart preached these things openly and discussed them in private homes, and it appears that he gained a following. A number of those who occupied the castle of St Andrews after his execution found themselves imprisoned after the siege was lifted, and among these Knox reports several incidents of prisoners refusing to go to Mass, whether in Cherbourg or Mont Saint Michel or Rouen, or even on the French galleys, where Scots prisoners refused to reverence the Mass and threw an image of the Virgin Mary overboard, calling it an idol.<sup>89</sup> Back in Scotland, three years after Wishart's death, a Provincial Council of the church gathered and offered guidelines for heretical prosecutions, which

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<sup>85</sup> Knox, *Works*, i, 156, 158-59.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 157, 160.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 162, 165-66.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Wishart's prayer on the scaffold that God would "conserve, defend and help thy Congregation, which thou hast chosen befor the begynning of the world": *ibid.*, i, 171; Kirk cites this as a significant conceptual shift for the evangelicals: Kirk, "Privy Kirks", 10.

<sup>89</sup> Knox, *Works*, i, 225-27.

were now to be focused “chiefly against those who inveigh against the sacrament of the Eucharist”. Inquisition was to be made

[i]n the first place, against those who rail against the sacraments themselves or against the ceremonies, rites, and observances received by the church and used in the administration of the sacraments, and especially in the sacrifice of the mass, in baptism, confirmation, extreme unction, penance, and the other sacraments.

Likewise, inquisitors were to seek out those who disparaged images, fasts and feasts, and ecclesiastical censure; who denied the merit of good works, Purgatory, the intercession of saints, or the authority of general councils; and those who believed in soul-sleep.<sup>90</sup> Some of these charges had appeared only (as far as the records allow) in Wishart’s trial, indicating that the Provincial Council had a sense that his teaching had spread. Moreover, it is only after Wishart’s trial that authorities turned their attention to sacramentarianism; still, however, there is no question regarding alternative sacramental practice. Wishart appears to have succeeded primarily in encouraging mistrust or rejection of Mass, though at least two of his followers took bolder steps.

Knox, as has been seen, used sharp language to distinguish the true and false churches and administered a Reformed eucharist within a year of Wishart’s death. By 1550, the Provincial Council’s guidelines for prosecution were used in Ayrshire against another probable disciple of Wishart, Adam Wallace. From the west coast, Wallace had been tutor to the children of Cockburn of Ormiston in East Lothian; the evangelicals do seem to have known where they could find their fellows.<sup>91</sup> Among

<sup>90</sup> David Patrick (ed.), *Statutes of the Scottish Church 1225-1559* (Edinburgh, 1907), 124, 126-27.

<sup>91</sup> On Wallace’s connections, see Margaret H.B. Sanderson, *Ayrshire and the Reformation: People and Change, 1490-1600* (East Linton, 1997), 69-70; “it is really with the preaching mission in 1545 of George Wishart ... that the secret network of protestant associations among the lairds begins to be uncovered”: Kirk, “Privy Kirks”, 9.

the charges against Wallace, Knox lists preaching, meddling with Scripture, baptizing his own child, and denial of Purgatory, prayer to the saints, and prayers for the dead. Wallace's answers in this account show a clearly developed notion of the true and false churches. Charged with preaching, he denied himself "worthy of sa excellent a vocatioun", but did concede that "sometymes at the table, and sometymes in other prevey places" he had offered exhortations from Scripture.<sup>92</sup> By reading the Bible, he was seeking out his own salvation since the bishops were "dum doggis, and unsavery salt"; further, he considered the bishops unworthy to judge him, since they "ar oppen ennemyes to me and to the doctrin that I professe".<sup>93</sup> Wallace claimed he had baptised his own child because of the "lack of a trew minister", which might indicate an emergency baptism were it not for his appeal to the example of Abraham circumcising Ishmael. Purgatory, prayers to the saints, and prayers for the dead were rejected by Wallace as unscriptural.<sup>94</sup> Wallace, more than the evangelicals of the previous two decades, acted on his distinction of the true and false churches, not only preaching in private, but denying the bishops' authority over him and especially baptizing his child.

In Foxe's account of Wallace, the latter is accused of denying transubstantiation and believing the Mass to be idolatrous; his accuser claimed that these were "so horrible crimes of heresie, as neuer was imagined in thys countrey of before", showing a sense that somehow this case differed from those that had come before it.<sup>95</sup> Wallace's answers appeal again to the scripture principle. He had not read about transubstantiation in the three different Bible translations he had read (on his belt were Bibles in "French, Dutch, and English"), and had never said anything about the sacraments that went beyond scripture; challenged to clarify this, Wallace recited the words of institution in English, perhaps hinting at further sacramental ministration on his

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<sup>92</sup> Knox, *Works*, i, 238.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 239-40.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 241

<sup>95</sup> Foxe's account is reprinted in *ibid.*, i, 544-50 (quotation, 545).



part.<sup>96</sup> He clarified that God was present where the sacrament was truly ministered, and then gave a detailed denial of the ubiquity of Christ's body, showing a well-digested Zwinglian position on the eucharist. Answering the charge that he held the Mass to be idolatrous, Wallace reiterated the scripture principle, and affirmed that anything not found in scripture was idolatrous.<sup>97</sup> Wallace's position on the Mass is better known than that of previous evangelicals in part because the new inquisitorial guidelines called for closer examination. However, he had clearly embraced Reformed teaching on this subject, and although he was not asked about sacramental practice, his answers suggest that on this point he would likewise follow Wishart's lead.

### **A development of Scottish evangelical theology**

The surviving tracts and heresy proceedings of the 1530s and 1540s present a thoroughly unified front on the question of justification by faith alone. The development of this doctrine was important to authors who had gone into exile, and while each focuses on rather different practical aspects of solafideism, each also rehearses the central core of Lutheran teaching. It is easy to pass over this material too quickly because of its familiarity, but in each case this presentation shows the importance that the authors placed on detailed theological understanding of salvation, in very personal terms. Here, surely, was the most important focus for the early Scottish evangelicals: they had a

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<sup>96</sup> Knox, *Works*, i, 545. In this passage, Wallace uses the future tense in the phrases "my bodye, which shall be broken and geuen for you" and "cup of the new testament, which shoulde be shedde"; the latter is consistent with Tyndale's translations of 1526 and 1534, but I have not found the source for the future tense in the first phrase. Curiously, both are consistent with the Rheims New Testament of 1582.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 546-47. Cf. the charge that "the GOD which we worshyp, is but bread, sowed of corne, growing of the earth, baked of mens handes, and nothing els" to the charge against Wishart that "the Sacrament of the Altare was but a pcece of bread, backin upon the asches, and no other thing elles" (i, 158 and repeated in Wishart's defence i, 159).

shared story. Luther's understanding of salvation offered not only a common vocabulary but a common narrative at the deepest level, along the way explaining that persecution would come, validating the experience of those who embraced it.

Justification by faith alone was a doctrine that called for practical application, and all of the suggestions of the Scots evangelicals reflect developments elsewhere. What is unusual about the Scottish evangelical texts before Wishart is that they suggest so little with regard to the sacraments and the Church. Continental Protestant discussion of the eucharist flourished from the mid-1520s, and discussion of the nature of the Church had developed apace. It may be assumed that Hamilton, Alesius, Gau, and Johnstone encountered these developments while in exile, but they opted not write (or translate) much about them for their fellows at home. Thus with sporadic leadership and the lack of a distinct ecclesiology, there was a limited conceptual framework within which Scots evangelicals might have envisaged more radical action. Certainly they were committed to domestic devotional practice and group reading, but beyond these, there was little that could be considered uniform activity. On the whole, the tracts were suggestive rather than specific on what evangelicals, frustrated by church practices which promoted the merits of good works in salvation, were to do.

Perhaps this is because there was trouble enough. By reading, especially by group reading, the Scottish evangelicals were breaking the law, and so faced the threat of persecution. Although prosecutions were comparatively sporadic, all the texts considered in this paper address an audience for whom persecution is a very real threat. In this respect, it is unwise to downplay the significance of evangelical identity. If the evangelicals were far from being a well-defined and militant minority, they were also not simply members of a book club. Books, especially New Testaments, were enormously important to evangelical conventicles, but they were dangerous.

A shift in thinking does appear to have emerged after the itinerancy of George Wishart, who proclaimed that the Mass was idolatrous and a clearer distinction between the true and false churches. After his trial

and execution, the church was more concerned to root out sacramental heresy, and individuals like Knox and Wallace show marked development in these respects, to the point of presiding over alternative ministration of the eucharist and baptism. But Wishart had not convinced all the evangelicals to take such bold steps; his main impact was to spread the ideas that might underpin them.

It is in this respect that we may return to the dinner-party and see why Knox was so alarmed by what he found. To Knox, the Mass was clearly idolatrous, and the institutional church was clearly a false church. The evangelicals at the dinner were made uncomfortable by Knox's questioning their attendance at Mass, very possibly because they already had a grasp of Reformed ecclesiology and sacramental thought from Wishart, and increasing contacts with English and continental Protestantism. But now they were being asked to act on this, and they hastily composed a defence. There is little reason to suspect that their appeal to the Apostle Paul had been much considered; like Nicodemism generally, this was an "*a posteriori* reaction" rather than an "*a priori* consideration".<sup>98</sup> But Knox was persuasive, as were the other Reformed preachers of the 1550s like John Willock and Paul Methven: in the later 1550s, the formation of "privy kirks" as distinct from evangelical conventicles is clear.<sup>99</sup> Knox's deep convictions about the church and the sacraments provided a catalyst for this change, and although there were other factors at work, this preaching tour was of particular importance in changing the minds of the Scottish evangelicals.

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<sup>98</sup> Carlos M. N. Eire, "Calvin and Nicodemism: A Reappraisal", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, x (1979), 44-69.

<sup>99</sup> Kirk places emphasis upon the emergence of "Calvinist discipline, determination and dedication instilled through the eldership and diaconate", complementary aspects to those I have pursued: "Privy Kirks", 15.

